1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

●487 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have
133 made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

487
133 the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most
487 commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dam-waz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and [465] have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally [675] but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected.

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yachen gerad"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shay bet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "ful", probably of Arab introduction,

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("tej byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wandering among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1]

121

I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock. A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus.

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

174 211 [48]

In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes.

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. W. Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

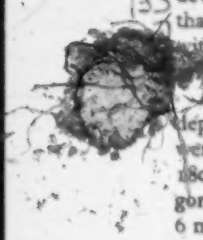
The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.



In completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization.

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit.

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence.

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 [487] Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or [323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which [482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

971 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 518 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

133
487
712
361
312
346

[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

133
487
712
361
312
346

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

[End map II-B]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices. 101 563

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake to Courtohha, is $1\frac{1}{2}$ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace. 361

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs. 563

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by Amoro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day. 487

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constantly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills 361

[p. 59]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little